AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of synthesizing a media article, said method comprising:

automatically reading digital metadata associated with a first set of stored media data, which digital metadata includes:

related set identity data identifying a second set of stored media data; and

relationship metadata which ~~data which~~ indicates the relationship between what is represented by the first set of stored media data and what is represented by the second set of stored media data; and

automatically synthesizing said media article comprising a plurality of selected sets of stored media data or identifiers thereof concatenated together, said automatic synthesis including automatically arranging said first and second sets of stored media data or identifiers thereof within the media article on the basis of the read relationship metadata; ~~in accordance with said relationship data;~~ and

storing or outputting said media article.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 further comprising generating said related set identity data and said relationship metadata. ~~relationship data.~~

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein said relationship metadata further comprises content data indicating what is represented by said sets of stored media data, said method further comprising:

automatically selecting, from said plurality of sets of stored media data, one or more selected sets of stored media data in dependence upon said content data.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 3 comprising:

making a plurality of such automatic selections ; and

automatically concatenating the results of said selections.

Claim 5 (Canceled).

6. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 in which said set of stored media data contains video data.

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for the automatic composition of media articles comprising:

one or more memory devices storing, for each of a plurality of sets of stored media data including first and second sets of stored media data, metadata which at least for said first set of media data includes:

i) related set identify metadata ~~identify data~~ identifying the second ~~a second~~ set of stored media data; and

ii) relationship metadata which indicates the relationship between what is represented by the first set of stored media data and what is represented by the second set of stored media data; ~~data indicating one or more relationships between the content represented in said set of stored media data and the content represented in one or more other sets of stored media data;~~ and

one or more digital processors in communication with said one or more memory devices and operable ~~arranged in operation~~ to automatically read said metadata and to

automatically synthesize a media comprising a plurality of selected sets of stored media data or identifiers thereof concatenated together by ~~article, said automatic synthesis including~~ arranging said first and second sets of stored media data or identifiers thereof within the media article on the basis of the read relationship ~~in accordance with said relationship data read from said~~ metadata.

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7 in which said relationship metadata indicates ~~data indicates~~ a causal relationship between what is represented by one of said sets of stored media data and what is represented by another of said sets of stored media data.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said one or more processors is further arranged in operation to provide a user with an interface enabling the user to enter said relationship metadata. ~~relationship data.~~

10. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 9 wherein:

said metadata is stored in a database; and

said one or more processors are further arranged in operation to query said database to obtain identifiers of sets of stored media data whose metadata meets one or more conditions specified in said query.

11. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 10 in which said database comprises an object-oriented database and metadata for each set of stored media data is stored as an object in said object-oriented database.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 11 in which said relationship metadata is ~~data is~~ stored as data which defines the relationships between objects in the database.

13. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 12 in which membership in a set is indicated by each member of the set inheriting from a container object.

14. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7 further comprising a content store storing a plurality of sets of stored media data, said metadata for each set of stored media data including a pointer to the location of said set of stored media data in said content store.

15. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein:

said one or more memories further store one or more media element selection criteria; and

said one or more processors are further arranged in operation to receive a set of media element identifiers and to select said input set by automatically selecting a subset of media element identifiers in accordance with said selection criteria.

16. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 15 wherein:

said one or more media element selection criteria comprise a set of template data, each of said sets of template data listing a plurality of slots to be filled, and, for each slot, one or more associated requirements of media elements for filling said slot ; and

said one or more processors are further arranged in operation to provide said subset by, for each of said slots, automatically retrieving one or more identifiers of

media elements whose metadata accords with said one or more requirements for said slots.

17. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said sets of stored media data comprise video data.

18. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 2 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.

20. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 3 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.

21. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 4 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the

user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.